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COLERIDGE  
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Poems by  
O D E

ON THE

DEPARTING YEAR.

By S. T. COLERIDGE.

Iou, iou, w w κακα.

Τηρ' αυ με δεινος ορθομαντειας πονος

Στροβει, ταρασσων φροιμιοις εφημιοις.

Το μελλον ηξει και συ μην ταχει παρων

Αγαν γ' αληθομαντιν μ' ερεις.

ÆSCHY. AGAMEM. 1225.

BRISTOL;

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1796.

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Tr. R. A.  
821.72  
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To THOMAS POOLE, of Stowey.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

SOON after the commencement of this month, the Editor of the Cambridge Intelligencer (a newspaper conducted with so much ability, and such unmixed and fearless zeal for the interests of Piety and Freedom, that I cannot but think my poetry honoured by being permitted to appear in it), requested me, by Letter, to furnish him with some Lines for the last day of this Year. I promised him that I would make the attempt; but, almost immediately after, a rheumatic complaint seized on my head, and continued to prevent the possibility of poetic composition till within the last three days. So in the course of the last three days the following Ode was produced. In general, when an Author informs the Public that his production was struck off in a great hurry, he offers an insult, not an excuse. But I trust that the present case is an exception, and that the peculiar circumstances, which obliged me to write with such unusual rapidity, give a propriety to my professions of it: nec nunc eam apud te jacto, sed et ceteris indico; ne quis asperiore lima carmen examinet, et a confuso scriptum et quod frigidum erat ni statim traderem. (I avail myself of the words of Statius, and hope that I shall likewise be able to say of any

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weightier publication, what *he* has declared of his *Thebaid*, that it had been tortured\* with a laborious Polish.)

For me to discuss the *literary* merits of this hasty composition, were idle and presumptuous. If it be found to possess that Impetuosity of Transition, and that Precipitation of Fancy and Feeling, which are the *essential* excellencies of the sublimer Ode, its deficiency in less important respects will be easily pardoned by those, from whom alone praise could give me pleasure: and whose minuter criticisms will be disarmed by the reflection, that these Lines were conceived “not in the soft obscurities of Retirement, or under the Shelter of Academic Groves, but amidst inconvenience and distraction, in sickness and in sorrow.” I am more anxious, lest the *moral* spirit of the Ode should be mistaken. You, I am sure, will not fail to recollect, that among the Ancients, the Bard and the Prophet were one and the same character; and you *know*, that although I prophesy curses, I pray fervently for blessings.

Farewell, Brother of my Soul!

— O ever found the same,  
And trusted and belov'd!

Never without an emotion of honest pride do I subscribe myself  
Your grateful and affectionate Friend,

BRISTOL,

December 26, 1796.

S. T. COLERIDGE.

\* Multâ cruciata limâ.

# O D E

ON THE

## *DEPARTING YEAR.*

### STROPHE I.

SPIRIT, who sweepest the wild Harp of Time,  
It is most hard with an untroubled Ear  
Thy dark inwoven Harmonies to hear!  
Yet, mine eye fixt on Heaven's unchanged clime,  
Long had I listen'd, free from mortal fear,  
With inward stillness and a bowed mind:  
When lo! far onwards waving on the wind  
I saw the skirts of the DEPARTING YEAR!

Starting from my silent sadness  
Then with no unholy madness,  
Ere yet the entered cloud forbade my sight,  
I rais'd th' impetuous song, and solemnized his flight.

## STROPHE II.

Hither from the recent Tomb ;  
From the Prison's direr gloom ;  
From Poverty's heart-wasting languish ;  
From Distemper's midnight anguish :  
Or where his two bright torches blending  
Love illumines Manhood's maze ;  
Or where o'er cradled Infants bending  
Hope has fix'd her wishful gaze :  
Hither, in perplexed dance,  
Ye Woes, and young-eyed Joys, advance !  
By Time's wild harp, and by the Hand  
Whose indefatigable Sweep  
Forbids its fateful strings to sleep,  
I bid you haste, a mixt tumultuous band !  
From every private bower,  
And each domestic hearth,  
Haste for one solemn hour ;  
And with a loud and yet a louder voice  
O'er the sore travail of the common earth  
Weep and rejoice !  
Seiz'd in sore travail and portentous birth

(Her eye-balls flashing a pernicious glare)

Sick NATURE struggles ! Hark—her pangs increase !

Her groans are horrible ! But ô ! most fair

The promis'd Twins, she bears—EQUALITY and PEACE !

### E P O D E.

I mark'd Ambition in his war-array :

I heard the mailed Monarch's troublous cry—

“ Ah ! whither does the Northern Conqueress stay ?

Northern Conqueress.—A Subsidiary Treaty had been just concluded ; and Russia was to have furnished more effectual aid, than that of pious manifestoes, to the powers combined against France. I rejoice—not over the deceased Woman—(I never dared figure the Russian Sovereign to my imagination under the dear and venerable character of WOMAN—WOMAN, that complex term for Mother, Sister, Wife !) I rejoice, as at the disenshrining of a Dæmon ! I rejoice, as at the extinction of the evil Principle impersonated ! This very day, six years ago, the massacre of Ismail was perpetrated. THIRTY THOUSAND HUMAN BEINGS, MEN, WOMEN & CHILDREN, murdered in cold blood, for no other crime, than that their Garrison had defended the place with perseverance and bravery ! Why should I recall the poisoning of her husband, her iniquities in Poland, or her late unmotived attack on Persia ; the desolating ambition of her public Life, or the libidinous excesses of her private Hours ! I have no wish to qualify myself for the office of Historiographer to the King of Hell ——— !

December 23, 1796.

“ Groans not her Chariot o'er its onward way ?

Fly, mailed Monarch, fly !

Stunn'd by Death's “ twice mortal ” mace

No more on MURDER's lurid face

Th' insatiate Hag shall glote with drunken eye !

Manes of th' unnumbered Slain !

Ye that gasp'd on WARSAW's plain !

Ye that erst at ISMAIL's tower,

When human Ruin chok'd the streams,

Fell in Conquest's glutted hour

Mid Women's shrieks and Infant's screams ;

Whose shrieks, whose screams were vain to stir

Loud-laughing, red-eyed Massacre !

Spirits of th' uncoffin'd Slain,

Sudden blasts of Triumph swelling

Oft at night, in misty train

Rush around her narrow Dwelling !

Th' exterminating Fiend is fled—

(Foul her Life and dark her Doom !)

Mighty Army of the Dead,

Dance, like Death-fires, round her Tomb !

Then with prophetic song relate

Each some scepter'd Murderer's fate !

When shall scepter'd SLAUGHTER cease ?  
 Awhile He crouch'd, O Victor France !  
 Beneath the light'ning of thy Lance,  
 With treacherous dalliance wooing PEACE.  
 But soon up-springing from his dastard trance

With treacherous dalliance wooing Peace.—To juggle this easily-juggled people into better humour with the supplies (and themselves, perhaps, affrighted by the successes of the French,) our Ministry sent an ambassador to Paris to sue for Peace. The Supplies are granted: and in the mean time the Arch-duke Charles turns the scale of Victory on the Rhine, and Buonaparte is checked before Mantua. Straightways, our courtly Messenger is commanded to *uncurl* his lips, and propose to the lofty Republic to *restore* all *its* conquests, and to suffer England to *retain* all *hers*, (at least all her *important* ones) as the only terms of Peace, and the ultimatum of the negoeiation!

Θρασύνει γαρ αισχεομέτις  
 Ταλαιπω ΠΑΡΑΚΟΠΑ πρωτοπηγίων.

ÆSCHYL. AG. 230.

The friends of Freedom in this country are idle. Some are timid; some are selfish; and many the torpedo touch of hopelessness has numbed into inactivity. We would fain hope, that (if the above account be accurate—it is only the French account) this dreadful instance of infatuation in our ministry will rouse them to one effort more; and that at one and the same time in our different great towns the people will be called on to think solemnly, and declare their thoughts fearlessly, by every method, which the *remnant* of the constitution allows.

The boastful, bloody Son of Pride betray'd  
 His Hatred of the blest and blessing Maid.  
 One cloud, O Freedom ! cross'd thy orb of Light  
 And sure, he deem'd, that Orb was quench'd in night :  
 For still does MADNESS roam on GUILT's bleak dizzy height !

### ANTISTROPHE I.

DEPARTING YEAR ! 'twas on no earthly shore  
 My Soul beheld thy Vision. Where, alone,  
 Voiceless and stern, before the Cloudy Throne  
 Aye MEMORY sits ; there, garmented with gore,  
 With many an unimaginable groan  
 Thou storiedst thy sad Hours ! Silence ensued :  
 Deep Silence o'er th' ethereal Multitude,  
 Whose purple Locks with snow-white Glories shone.

Then, his eye wild ardors glancing,  
 From the choired Gods advancing,  
 The SPIRIT of the EARTH made reverence meet  
 And stood up beautiful before the Cloudy Seat !

My Soul beheld thy Vision.—*i. e.* Thy Image in a Vision.

## ANTISTROPHE II.

On every Harp, on every Tongue  
 While the mute Enchantment hung;  
 Like Midnight from a thundercloud,  
 Spake the sudden SPIRIT loud—  
 “ Thou in stormy Blackness throning  
 “ Love and uncreated Light,  
 “ By the Earth’s unsolac’d groaning  
 “ Seize thy terrors, Arm of Might!  
 “ By Belgium’s corse-impeded flood!  
 “ By Vendee steaming Brother’s blood!  
 “ By PEACE with proffer’d insult scar’d,  
 “ Masked hate, and envying scorn!  
 “ By Years of Havoc yet unborn;  
 “ And Hunger’s bosom to the frost-winds bar’d!  
 “ But chief by Afric’s wrongs  
 “ Strange, horrible, and foul!  
 “ By what deep Guilt belongs  
 “ To the deaf Synod, “ full of gifts and lies!”  
 “ By Wealth’s insensate Laugh! By Torture’s Howl!  
 “ Avenger, rise!

Belgium’s corse-impeded flood.—The Rhine.

“ For ever shall the bloody Island scowl?  
“ For aye unbroken, shall her cruel Bow  
“ Shoot Famine’s arrows o’er thy ravag’d World ?  
“ Hark ! how wide NATURE joins her groans below—  
“ Rise, God of Nature, rise ! Why sleep thy Bolts unhurl’d ?

—*bloody island scowl ?*

“ In Europe the smoking villages of Flanders and the putrified fields of La Véndee—from Africa the unnumbered victims of a detestable Slave-trade—in Asia the desolated plains of Indostan and the million whom a rice-contracting Governor destroyed by famine—in America the recent enormities of our scalp-merchants—the four quarters of the globe groan beneath the intolerable iniquity of this nation !” Addresses to the People, p. 46.

## EPODE II.

The Voice had ceas'd, the Phantoms fled,  
 Yet still I gasp'd and reel'd with dread.  
 And ever when the dream of night  
 Renews the vision to my sight,  
 Cold sweat-damps gather on my limbs,  
 My Ears throb hot, my eye-balls start,  
 My Brain with horrid tumult swims,  
 Wild is the Tempest of my Heart ;  
 And my thick and struggling breath  
 Imitates the toil of Death !  
 No uglier agony confounds  
 The Soldier on the war-field spread,  
 When all foredone with toil and wounds  
 Death-like he dozes among heaps of Dead !  
 (The strife is o'er, the day-light fled,  
 And the Night-wind clamours hoarse ;  
 See ! the startful Wretch's head  
 Lies pillow'd on a Brother's Corse !)  
 O doom'd to fall, enslav'd and vile,  
 O ALBION ! O my mother Isle !  
 Thy valleys, fair as Eden's bowers,

Glitter green with sunny showers ;  
Thy grassy Upland's gentle Swells  
Echo to the Bleat of Flocks ;  
(Those grassy Hills, those glitt'ring Dells  
Proudly ramparted with rocks)  
And Ocean 'mid his uproar wild  
Speaks safety to his Island-child.  
Hence for many a fearless age  
Has social Quiet lov'd thy shore ;  
Nor ever sworded Foeman's rage  
Or sack'd thy towers, or stain'd thy fields with gore.  
Disclaim'd of Heaven ! mad Av'rice at thy side,  
At coward distance, yet with kindling pride—  
Safe 'mid thy herds and corn-fields thou hast stood,  
And join'd the yell of Famine and of Blood.  
All nations curse thee : and with eager wond'ring  
Shall hear **DESTRUCTION**, like a vulture, scream !  
Strange-eyed **DESTRUCTION**, who with many a dream  
Of central flames thro' nether seas upthund'ring  
Soothes her fierce solitude, yet (as she lies  
Stretch'd on the marge of some fire-flashing fount  
In the black chamber of a sulphur'd mount,)

If ever to her lidless dragon eyes,  
 O ALBION ! thy predestin'd ruins rise,  
 The Fiend-hag on her perilous couch doth leap,  
 Mutt'ring distemper'd triumph in her charmed sleep.

Away, my soul, away !  
 In vain, in vain, the birds of warning sing—  
 And hark ! I hear the famin'd brood of prey  
 Flap their lank pennons on the groaning wind !

Away, my Soul, away !  
 I unpartaking of the evil thing,  
 With daily prayer, and daily toil  
 Soliciting my scant and blameless soil,  
 Have wail'd my country with a loud lament.  
 Now I recenter my immortal mind  
 In the long sabbath of high self-content ;  
 Cleans'd from the fleshly Passions that bedim  
 God's Image, Sister of the Seraphim.

## L I N E S

*Addressed to a young man of Fortune who abandoned himself to  
an indolent and causeless Melancholy.*

HENCE, that fantastic Wantonness of Woe

O Youth to partial Fortune vainly dear !  
To plunder'd WANT's half-shelter'd Hovel go,

Go, and some hunger-bitten Infant hear

Moan haply in a dying Mother's Ear ;

Or when the cold and dismal fog-damps brood  
O'er the rank church-yard with scar elm-leaves strew'd,  
Pace round some Widow's grave, whose dearer Part

Was slaughter'd, where o'er his uncoffin'd limbs  
The flocking Flesh-birds scream'd ! Then, while thy Heart  
Groans, and thine eyes a fiercer Sorrow dims,  
Know (and the Truth shall kindle thy young mind)

What Nature makes thee mourn, she bids thee heal !  
O abject ! if to sickly Dreams resign'd

All effortless thou leave Earth's common-weal  
A prey to the thron'd Murderers of Mankind !

S. T. Coleridge.

WM. MICHAEL ROSSETTI,  
Chairman,  
THOMAS J. WISE,  
Hon. Sec.

Shelley Society,  
Hon. Secretary: THOMAS J. WISE,  
52, ASHLEY ROAD, CROUCH HILL,  
LONDON, N.

July 6<sup>th</sup>

1894

Dear Sirs

Thanks for  
report. Please state  
condition & price.

Tolneridge's "Ode  
on the Departing Year"  
is one of the rarest books  
in modern poetical  
literature, only some  
Five, or at most Six,  
copies being known.

It is very interesting  
to find another turning  
up now.—

Yrs truly  
Mr. L. Wise









Many of the first editions of the writings of S. T. Coleridge are of very considerable scarcity, but the most uncommon of all is a thin quarto pamphlet of sixteen pages, entitled, "Ode | on the | Departing Year. | By S. T. Coleridge. | [Quotation from *Æschylus*] | Bristol; | Printed by N. Biggs, | and sold by J. Parsons, Paternoster-row, London. | 1796." Of this *brochure* no copy is believed to have appeared for either public or private sale during the last eighteen years; and indeed, only three examples in all were until quite recently known to Coleridge specialists. One of these is in the Rowfant Library, the possession of Mr. Frederick Locker-Lampson; a second is preserved in the British Museum —both being sadly "cut." Such being the case, the pamphlet has naturally been the object of keen search on the part of hunters after bibliographical rarities.

But a short while since a copy came to light, and was sold by Messrs. Sotheby, Wilkinson and Hodge on April 18 (the third day of the Buckley sale) for £21 10s., a by no means unreasonable price. It was bound up in a volume of old quarto tracts, amongst which was an example of Coleridge's "Fears in Solitude," Bristol, 1798; and also a very poor and much dilapidated copy of Wordsworth's "An Evening Walk," London, 1793. The volume was bought upon commission for Mr. Thomas J. Wise. And now another specimen has been unearthed. It was discovered by a fortunate individual who espied it lurking in a bundle of old books and tracts which was sold, with other lots, in the Romney sale at Christie's on Thursday last. It was not separately catalogued, and therefore passed almost unnoticed, and was knocked down for the modest sum of £4 3s., a splendid bargain for its lucky finder, who generously passed it on to his friend Mr. Wise. Both copies are in first-rate condition, being fresh and clean, with the leaves entirely untrimmed.

